

# Canterbury Minutes and Agendas Procedure

rev 2/13/2025

## Contents

Purpose.....	3
Scheduling Meetings.....	4
What is a meeting?.....	4
Types of Meetings.....	5
Regularly Scheduled Meetings .....	6
Scheduling Non-Regularly Scheduled Meetings .....	6
Noticing.....	7
When does the meeting need to be posted? .....	7
What goes on the agenda/notice?.....	7
Meeting .....	7
Public Hearing .....	7
Zoom Meeting.....	7
Document Format .....	8
Posting.....	8
Email.....	8
Sam Lake House .....	8
Website.....	9
Concord Monitor.....	12
Day of Meeting .....	13
Before the Meeting .....	13
During the Meeting.....	14
What legally needs to be included in the minutes?.....	14
Approving Draft Minutes.....	14
Interrupting the meeting.....	15
After the Meeting.....	15
Post Meeting Tasks .....	16
Approved public minutes.....	16

Approved non-public session minutes .....	16
Draft minutes .....	17
At Minimum: .....	17
Best Practice: .....	17
Notice of decision for ZBA.....	17
How to Cancel/Reschedule/Continue Meetings .....	18
Cancel .....	18
Reschedule .....	18
Continue.....	18
Handling Mistakes .....	19
What if a quorum doesn't show up in person? .....	19
What if the Board closes a meeting too soon? .....	19
What if the Board talks about public topics in non-public session? .....	20
What if you missed a posting deadline? .....	20
What if you miss what someone said? .....	21
Document Specifications .....	23

## Purpose

This document is primarily for Recording Secretaries, but all Board/Committee members should read through it to understand how this process works.

It is meant to help standardize processes across all the different boards/committees/commissions/etc.

Having consistent practices is good for the Secretaries who need to work across multiple boards, the residents who want to know when and where to find information about meetings, and the Town as we try to comply with the Right To Know (RTK) law (RSA 91-A).

Plenty of variation is still possible since we know that what is needed for one board may be too cumbersome for a smaller committee. Each section of this document will try to indicate what is a legal requirement and what is a best practice.

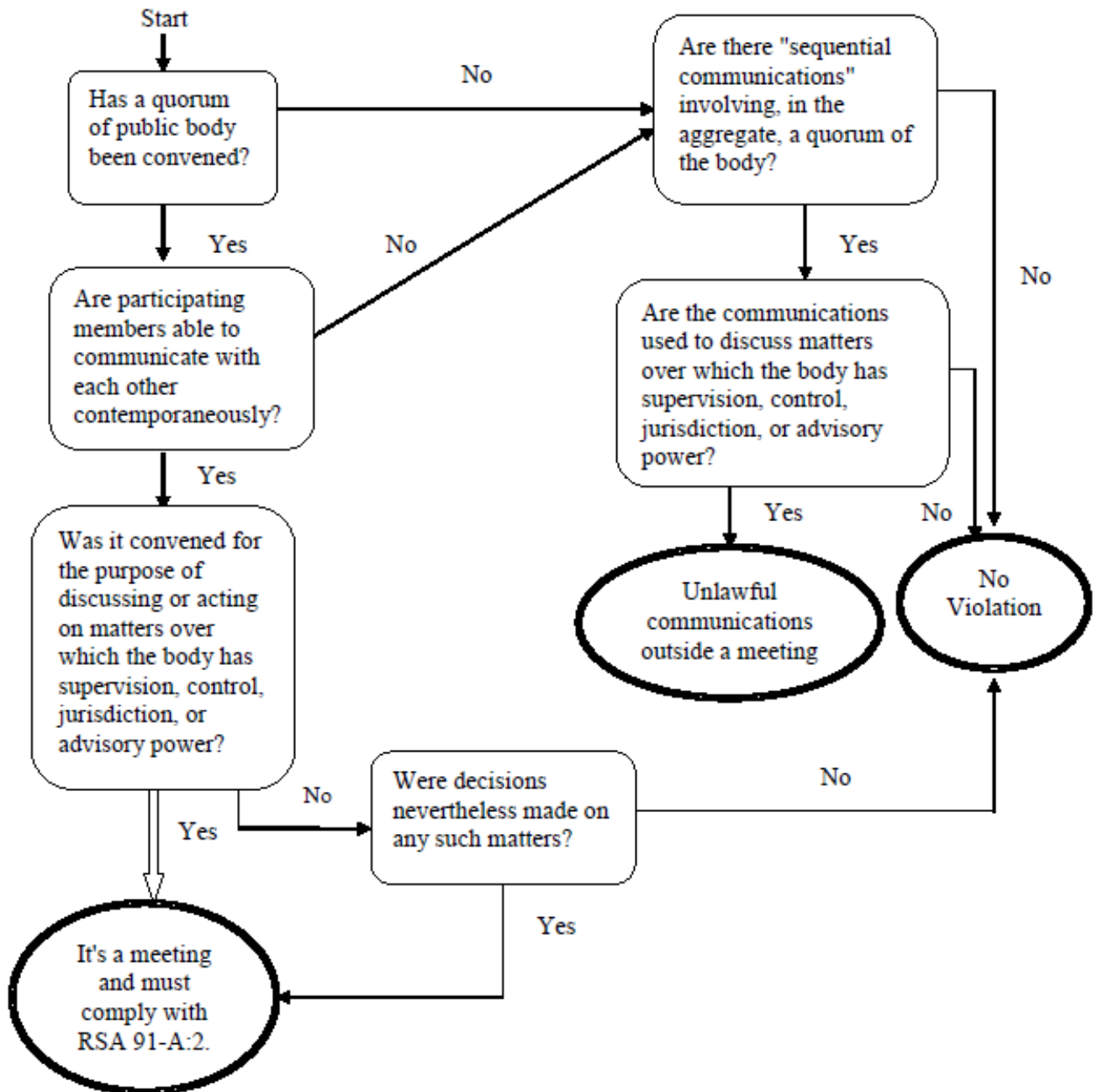
Regardless of what board you are on and what position you have on that board, we encourage you to review this document and become familiar with the process. We also encourage everyone to read Chapter 5 of NHMA's Knowing the Territory and exploring [NHMA's RTK website](#) to learn more about RSA 91-A.

A digital copy of Knowing the Territory can be obtained from the Admin Assistant.

The [full text of RSA 91-A is available online](#), but it is not super easy to read, so feel free to stick with the NHMA resources.

# Scheduling Meetings

## What is a meeting?



NHMA's Is It a Meeting?

[https://www.nhmunicipal.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/rtk\\_manual\\_is\\_it\\_a\\_meeting\\_.pdf](https://www.nhmunicipal.org/sites/default/files/uploads/documents/rtk_manual_is_it_a_meeting_.pdf)

# Types of Meetings

## Regular Meetings

All meetings that a Board/Committee has are public by default ([RSA 91-A:2](#)).

These meetings are open to the public, but the Board is not required to let the public speak. Generally, Canterbury runs these meetings informally and anyone can speak up as needed.

The Selectboard strongly encourages all Boards to video record/broadcast these meetings.

## Public Hearings

Public Hearings are meetings where the public is allowed to speak. They are usually required by law before a Board can take certain actions. For the sake of convenience, these often happen before/within a regular meeting.

The Selectboard strongly encourages all Boards to video record/broadcast these meetings.

## Non-public Sessions

These meetings are closed to the public and are part of a regular meeting. Even if all the board needs to talk about is in the non-public portion of the meeting, you still need to record publicly that a non-public session was gone into and why.

**Use the Non-public Meeting Checklist to enter a non-public session!** It is important for the Board to vote to go in and out of the session, to specify the reason that they are doing so, and to vote to seal the minutes.

## Subcommittee Meetings

These meetings are when a larger Board breaks out into smaller groups to accomplish specific projects. We don't record/broadcast them, but they are public and must be noticed/minutes written like a regular meeting. The main differences are that not everyone from the Board will be in attendance and these happen outside of the normally scheduled meetings.

## Working Sessions

These meetings are similar to public meetings and subcommittee meetings, but we don't record them or broadcast them. Anyone can still come in, but they aren't allowed to have any input unless specifically requested. This type of meeting is used for discussing specific projects and getting into the weeds on a topic that the regular meetings don't have time for.

## Emergency Meetings

The RSAs do provide for emergency meetings, but that is extremely rare. If you are considering having an emergency meeting, refer to RSA 91-A:2.

In this case, noticing and physical presence of a quorum have different requirements.

“An emergency shall mean a situation where immediate undelayed action is deemed to be imperative by the chairman or presiding officer of the public body, who shall post a notice of the time and place of such meeting as soon as practicable, and shall employ whatever further means are reasonably available to inform the public that a meeting is to be held. The minutes of the meeting shall clearly spell out the need for the emergency meeting.” [RSA 91-A:2, II](#)

“Except in an emergency, a quorum of the public body shall be physically present at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting. For purposes of this subparagraph, an "emergency" means that immediate action is imperative and the physical presence of a quorum is not reasonably practical within the period of time requiring action. The determination that an emergency exists shall be made by the chairman or presiding officer of the public body, and the facts upon which that determination is based shall be included in the minutes of the meeting.” [RSA 91-a:2, III\(b\)](#)

## **Regularly Scheduled Meetings**

Each Board has a different meeting schedule. They may have regularly scheduled meetings or as needed meetings.

- Board of Selectmen: 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month at 5 p.m.
- Planning Board: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- Zoning Board: 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- Solid Waste Committee: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of the month at 3:30 p.m.
- Community Power Committee: 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m.
- Energy Committee: 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month at 7 p.m.
- Quarterly: Trustees of the Trust Funds, Agricultural Commission
- As Needed: Budget Committee, Recreation Committee, Supervisors of the Checklist, Cemetery Trustees

## **Scheduling Non-Regularly Scheduled Meetings**

Check with your board to figure out when the members who need to attend are available.

Check with the appropriate person to see if the location you want is available.

- Meeting House, Town Hall, Sam Lake House Conference Room – Mary Hauptman/Kal McKay
- Library – Rachel Baker
- Municipal Complex Training Room – Deanna Sepessy

# Noticing

## When does the meeting need to be posted?

If there is a **public hearing**, consult the relevant RSA to determine how far in advance you need to post by. If the RSA says 10 days in advance, we consider it to be 10 calendar days which includes Saturdays/Sundays/Holidays.

**Regular meetings** must be noticed at least 24 hours in advance, but it is best practice to give as much notice as possible.

**Emergency meetings** must be noticed “as soon as practicable”, refer to [RSA 91-A:2, II](#).

## What goes on the agenda/notice?

### Meeting

- Check with the Board Chair
  - For Selectboard check with Town Administrator (TA) instead
  - For Land Use boards also check with the Land Use Administrator (LUA)
- Look at previous minutes to see if any topics were put on hold for further discussion at the next meeting.
- If any requests have come in from the public or other boards, be sure to run them by the Chair/TA/LUA so the requests can be prioritized.
- Include approving the minutes from the previous meeting.
- Legally, they only need a time/date/place, but it is best practice to include an agenda so the public can tell if the board will be covering a topic they care about.

### Public Hearing

The relevant RSA will determine the wording of the public hearing and exactly what information needs to be included.

### Zoom Meeting

The Selectboard strongly encourages all Boards to video record/broadcast all regular meetings and public hearings. This is for the convenience and accessibility of residents, taxpayers, board members, guests, and anyone else who wants to attend but can't make it in person.

“A member of the public body may participate in a meeting other than by attendance in person at the location of the meeting only when such attendance is not reasonably practical. Any reason that such attendance is not reasonably practical shall be stated in the minutes of the meeting.”

[RSA 91-A:2, III\(a\)](#)

“Except in an emergency, a quorum of the public body shall be physically present at the location specified in the meeting notice as the location of the meeting.” [RSA 91-a:2, III\(b\)](#)

If your Board uses Zoom, put the following on the agenda:

How to Join Online:

[Click Here](#) or go to [zoom.us/join](https://zoom.us/join) and enter the following information

Meeting ID: 603 783 9955

Passcode: 03224

All boards can use this same link and meeting UNLESS you plan to have a meeting at the same time as another board. In general we don't overlap, but if you are hosting a meeting off the regular schedule, then double check that no one else is going to be using this link already.

If you need another meeting link, contact the Admin Assistant and they can make you a new one.

## **Document Format**

**Use the template for your board!** AND make sure to follow the document formatting specifications. (See end of this document.)

## **Posting**

To comply with RTK laws, we post our notices AT LEAST on the Town's Website and at the Sam Lake House.

Some boards also post at the Country Store and the Library, but that is a "nice to have". If your board does post there, just make sure to do it consistently.

## **Email**

Make sure to email out the agenda to the board members and anyone else who is attending or needs to know about the meeting.

The Land Use Administrator should be included on land use boards. The Town Administrator should be included on the Selectboard.

If there are any documents that the board will need for the meeting, be sure to include those with the email (e.g. application, letters, draft minutes, budgets).

**DO NOT email minutes of non-public sessions!** The Board members can read paper copies at the meeting.

If your board wants to track action items, you could also include a reminder about whatever homework they have outstanding. (e.g. read a draft policy, contact so-and-so)

## **Sam Lake House**

Print out a copy of the notice/agenda and hang it up on bulletin board in the front hallway.

Each board/committee has their own section.

Put the latest notices at the front. If the package of paper is too big, remove the oldest notices/minutes first and recycle them. There is no requirement for how long those need to be



hung up after the meeting has passed. If someone asked for something that isn't hung up, we can pull a copy out of storage.

## Website

The Town's website is now hosted on WordPress and is at [canterburynh.gov](http://canterburynh.gov).

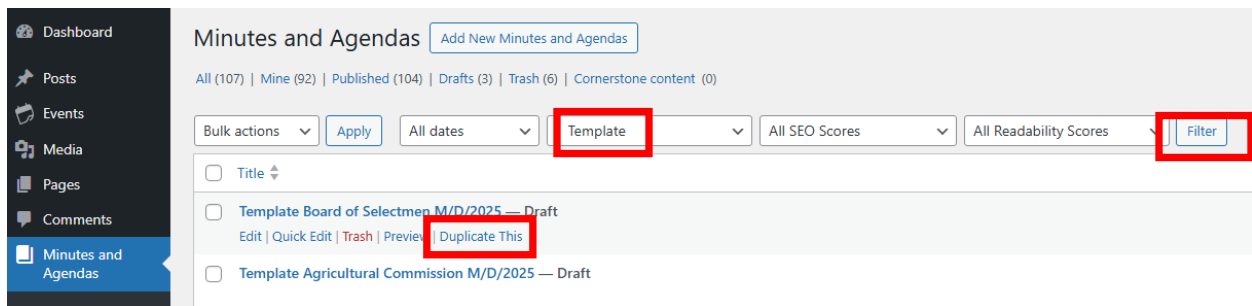
If you have an account, you can do your own posting using the following instructions.

If you don't have an account, you should ask the Admin Assistant for help and you can skip to the Concord Monitor section on Page 12.

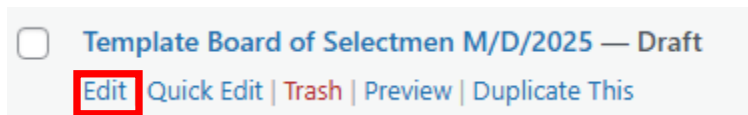
Each meeting needs to have 2 pages on the website: the Calendar Event and the Minutes and Agenda's Page.

### Minutes and Agendas Page

Under the Minutes and Agendas section of the Admin Panel, filter by Template. Or [Click Here](#).

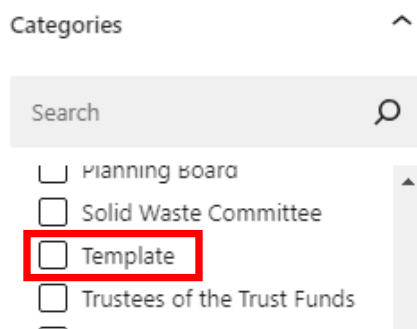


Click on *Duplicate This* to create a copy of the page for whichever board you are working on. This will refresh the page and show the draft you just created at the top of the list. Click on *Edit* for that draft.



Edit the template to include what you need. Be sure to do the following:

- Change the date in the title
- Uncheck Template from the Categories list



- Change the Date of the meeting. The Time and Location don't usually change, but if it does, be sure to update that.

Minutes and Agendas Post

Date  
02/03/2025

Time  
5:00 pm

Location  
Meeting House

- If the meeting is a public hearing, copy and paste the wording from the public hearing into the body.
- If you ARE NOT using Zoom, remove the "How to Join" text.
- **Make sure to attach the Agenda and Supporting Documents** using Add Row and Add File.

Agenda Repeater

Agendas	
1	<a href="#">Add File</a>
<a href="#">Add Row</a>	

- If the file you need is already uploaded on the website, search for it in the Media Library.
- Otherwise, use Upload files to put new files on the website.

### Select File

[Upload files](#) [Media Library](#)

When you are done, click on Publish.

[Publish](#)

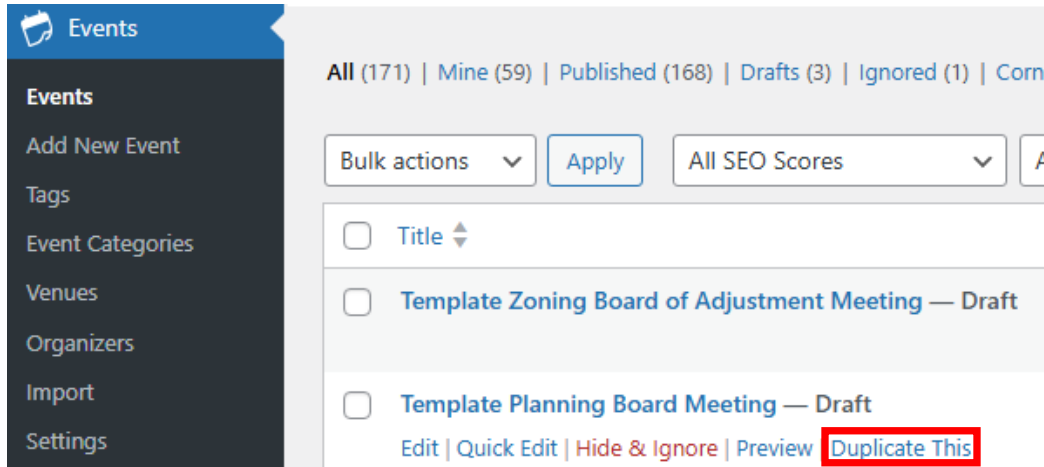
### Calendar Event

If it was a regularly scheduled meeting, the calendar event should already be on the website. If it is a new meeting, then you will need to make it.

EITHER WAY you will need to edit it to link to the Minutes/Agendas page you just made, so keep reading.

Under the Events section of the Admin Panel, you will see the templates listed at the top. Or [Click Here](#).

Click on *Duplicate This* to create a copy of the event for whichever board you are working on. This will refresh the page and show the draft you just created at the top of the list. Click on *Edit* for that draft.



Edit the template to include what you need. Be sure to check the following:

- Remove “Template” from the Title.
- In the Title change “Meeting” to whichever title applies: Special Meeting, Working Session, Public Hearing, etc.
- Change the Date of the meeting. The Time and Location don’t usually change, but if they do, be sure to update that.

TIME & DATE

Start/End:   to   [Ti](#)

All Day Event

*This event is from 7:00pm to 9:00pm on December 1, 2030.*

LOCATION

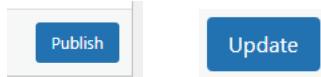
Venue:  [Edit Venue](#)

Map:  Show map  
 Show map link

- If the meeting is a public hearing, also copy and paste the wording from the public hearing into the body.
- If you ARE NOT using Zoom, remove the “How to Join” text.

- Replace the default text “An agenda will be posted a few days before the meeting.” with “View meeting minutes, agendas, and other documents here: [Board Name 1/13/2025](#)”. Be sure to edit the link to go to the Minutes/Agendas page you just created in the previous section.

When you are done, click Publish or Update.



## Concord Monitor

We only need to post notices in the Concord Monitor if it is required by RSA.

Planning Board and Zoning Board hearings for applications no longer need to be posted in the Monitor; putting them on the website and hanging up the paper copy is enough.

Hearings for the annual budget, warrant articles, and bonds still need to be advertised in the Monitor. Consult the relevant RSA or ask the Town Administrator if you aren't sure.

Email the text of the notice and the date it must be published by to Deb Spaulding at [dspaulding@cmonitor.com](mailto:dspaulding@cmonitor.com). Also cc [legals@cmonitor.com](mailto:legals@cmonitor.com) in case Deb is out of office.

Also cc Mary Hauptman at [mhauptman@canterburynh.gov](mailto:mhauptman@canterburynh.gov) so that she can keep track of what charges we are incurring.

They usually send back a confirmation email **which you need to reply to** before they will publish the ad. Print out the confirmation email and put it with your records in case you need to prove that it was actually published.

If they send you an invoice, print it out and give it to Mary.

# Day of Meeting

## Before the Meeting

- Check with the board Chair for any last minutes agenda updates that should be added.
  - For BOS check with Town Administrator instead
  - For Land Use boards also check with the Land Use Administrator
  - If the agenda does need updating, make those changes in a separate document and label it Agenda 2.
- Documents to print and bring
  - This will vary by board/committee and may even be different by meeting.
  - Pretty much every board will need a copy of the agenda for each board member.
  - You can do your printing at the Sam Lake House during office hours. Ask the Admin Assistant if you need help.
  - If there is a land use application being reviewed, you will need to bring a copy.
    - Do not remove the originals from the Town Office unless you absolutely have to (per Canterbury's *Retention of Land Use Applications and Any Accompanied Documents* policy).
    - If you have to bring an original document to a meeting, get it from the Town Office right before the meeting and return it right after the meeting.
    - If the office is closed, then return it the morning of the next business day.  
**RTK rules require the Town to provide public documents upon request.** So if the office is open, original documents must be in the proper file.
    - For example, if you need to bring a Road Waiver application to a Selectboard meeting you would make copies of anything letter sized and only bring the originals of the oversized diagrams/site plans/etc.
- Draft minutes to approve
  - If any changes have been submitted for the draft minutes that are up for approval, compile them into one list.
  - Minor changes such as typos, punctuation, formatting, etc. can be fixed without review by the Board.
  - If the changes are extensive, it is helpful to mark up paper copies that show the changes so everyone can follow along easily in the meeting.
  - Most boards will want a copy of the draft minutes per board member.
    - Technically everyone should have already read the draft minutes when they were sent out previously, so if no changes have been suggested, you might be able to get away with one paper copy.
    - The Planning Board wants 6 paper copies regardless of what amendments there are.
  - If you print copies of draft non-public minutes, you might want to number them or put Board member names so you can make sure you got all of them back at the end of the meeting.

- Set up Minutes Template
  - **Use the template for your board!**
  - Make sure to change dates/times/locations.
  - Put all of the agenda items in the template.
  - Fill in as much info as you can about documents being presented so you don't have to do it while people are talking about it.
- If it is a public hearing and you anticipate a lot of people coming to speak/observe, you can set up an attendance sheet for people to sign in at the door.
- Arrive at the meeting location ~30 minutes before the meeting start time.
- Rearrange tables and chairs as needed for your board.
- Set up recording equipment. If you are at the Meeting House, the instructions are hung up on the wall.

## During the Meeting

### What legally needs to be included in the minutes?

“The minimum content of meeting minutes includes:

- (1) names of members present;
- (2) other people participating (although it is not necessary to list everyone present);
- (3) a brief summary of subject matter discussed,
- (4) the names of the members who made or seconded each motion; and
- (5) any final decisions reached or action taken”

(NHMA's Knowing the Territory 2024 page 83 based on [RSA 91-A:2, II](#))

Public Hearings may require a motion be worded a certain way. Figure that out ahead of time and make sure the Chair knows what language to use.

Emergency meetings require the reasoning of why it was considered an emergency to be included. [RSA 91-A:2, II](#)

If a board member is attending via Zoom, it needs to be documented why they couldn't attend in person. [RSA 91-A:2, III\(a\)](#) Remember that a quorum still needs to be present in person.

Different boards may also have specific phrasing that they have been taught to use for certain actions. Those should be in the template for your board.

### Approving Draft Minutes

At Minimum:

- The minutes of the current meeting need to show that a motion was made and seconded and a vote taken on to approve the draft minutes.
  - If the draft minutes are to be changed, the current minutes should reflect what those changes were and that they were “approved as amended”.

### Best Practice:

- When the meeting reaches the agenda item for approving draft minutes, the secretary can read aloud each suggested amendment and the board can approve or disprove the change.
- If anyone has a suggested change that they didn't submit ahead of time, they can suggest it during the meeting, but the final wording needs to be written down to make sure there is no ambiguity about what was suggested.
- If there is disagreement amongst the board about if a change should be made or not, they need to vote on it.
- The secretary should control the pace of this conversation so they can be sure they understand exactly what the Board wants in the final record. If there is any uncertainty, the secretary should read back the final wording to the Board. Once the minutes are approved, they don't get to be edited again, so it is a "speak now or forever hold your peace" type of situation.
- If there are non-public draft minutes that need to be approved, the Board may need to go into non-public session to make edits. That is a pain in the butt, so if it is possible to make the changes without revealing what is on the paper, then do that.

### **Interrupting the meeting**

There are times when the Recording Secretary needs to speak up. Just raise your hand and either wait for the Chair to acknowledge you or interrupt if the need is urgent.

#### Reasons to Interrupt:

- If you don't know someone who is talking, you can ask them to state their name.
- If there are multiple conversations happening at once, you can remind everyone to stop cross-talking.
- If you can't hear what is being said because of low volume/mumbling/etc., you can ask the person to speak up/clearly. (Don't be rude!)
- If you need the exact wording of a motion for legal reasons, you can ask the person to repeat and/or read back what you have to the board.
- If the meeting has just finished and the board continues to talk business, you can remind them that it is an illegal meeting and they need to either disperse or formally reopen the meeting. If spectators have already left, you can't reopen the meeting.

### **After the Meeting**

- If you used Zoom at the Meeting House, shut down the recording equipment according to the manual on the wall.
- If you rearranged tables and chairs, consider putting it back for the next group. This really depends on which room you are in.

# Post Meeting Tasks

## Approved public minutes

- Take the draft minutes that were approved and convert the document into the final version.
  - This usually means removing the watermark and a title saying Draft.
  - This could also mean making the changes that were approved by the Board.
- Make a PDF version of the final minutes and put them on the website on the Minutes and Agenda page you made earlier. Remove the copy of the draft minutes from the website.
- Printing
  - All boards need at least 2 copies. One to hang up in the Sam Lake House on the bulletin board and one to give to Town Clerk Sam Papps.
  - Your board may also store hard copies of your minutes.
    - Selectboard: Keep them in the binder at the Admin Assistant's desk and include a copy of the agenda.
  - If there was an application that was heard, put a copy in the folder for that application.
  - Some boards also post copies at the Country Store and Library.
  - Remove any posted copies of the draft minutes.

## Approved non-public session minutes

- If you printed out copies of the draft for the Board to review at the meeting, shred them.
- Take the draft minutes that were approved and convert the document into the final version.
  - This usually means removing the watermark and a title saying Draft.
  - This could also mean making the changes that were approved by the Board.
- Print one copy of the final minutes and put it in a sealed envelope. Label the envelope with the Board Name, Meeting Date, "Non-public session minutes", and case number if applicable. Along the seal, sign your name and write the date you are sealing them.
- Where to put the envelope is going to depend on the Board.
  - Selectboard: cabinet next to the Admin Assistant's desk.
  - ZBA: cabinet next to the Admin Assistant's desk, but put a note that the minutes exist in the relevant application folder.
  - This is going to be formalized when the Municipal Records Committee makes a policy about handling and reviewing non-public minutes.
- We don't yet have a standard practice for keeping or deleting the electronic copies of the non-public minutes. If you aren't very careful with your file management, then err on the side of caution and delete the files once the paper copy has been made.



## Draft minutes

### At Minimum:

- Draft minutes MUST be completed and posted within 5 business days after the meeting per [RSA 91-A:2, II](#).
  - Business days are Monday through Friday and don't include holidays.
  - So if a meeting is held Monday night at 5 pm, the minutes must be posted by/on the following Monday before 5pm.
- When the draft is complete, it must be posted.
  - AT LEAST on the website (see Document Specifications section for format details) and at the Sam Lake House.
  - Potentially also at the Country Store and Library depending on the Board.
  - Email them out to the Board members for review.

### Best Practice:

For the sake of clarity, the Selectboard recommends using this method to handle editing draft minutes. This way prevents multiple copies of the same file lurking around and ensures that all edits are made publicly and in one go at the next meeting.

- Draft minutes are created by the Recording Secretary. If you need help remembering something specific or want someone to look over the minutes for typos, you can contact someone for help. Besides that, no one else should edit the draft minutes before they are posted.
- Draft copies of minutes must be clearly marked as draft in the name of the document and in the document itself. We suggest a watermark or indication in the title. The minutes template for your Board should have those built in.
- If anyone wants to suggest edits, they can email you back.
  - Board members should be careful to email back only the Recording Secretary and not the whole board, otherwise that turns into discussion and is an illegal meeting.
  - Edits needs to be specific (e.g. on line 34 change 'Kal said' to 'Michelle said')
  - Clarifying questions are fine, but only about what happened. If it turns out the Board made a mistake or wasn't clear enough about a decision, then that needs to be brought up at the next meeting and decided by the Board.
- The Secretary will compile a list of suggested changes and at the next meeting, they will present them to the Board for approval.

## Notice of decision for ZBA

The ZBA hearings also need to have a Notice of Decision published. The deadline for this is 72 hours. (Actual hours not "business hours").

This must be posted at the Sam Lake House and on the website. A copy must be put in the application file. You don't need to mail it out to the applicant unless they weren't at the hearing for some reason.

# How to Cancel/Reschedule/Continue Meetings

## Cancel

This most often happens because a Board really only meets “as needed” but they have a date booked in the calendar every month.

If a meeting isn't a regularly scheduled event and hasn't been posted at all yet, you don't need to formally cancel it, but it is best practice to give anyone who was going to attend the meeting a heads up that it isn't happening anymore.

Basically create an “anti-agenda”. So in addition to the time/date/location, also include why it was cancelled and when the next meeting is. Follow the file formatting detailed at the end of this guide (Document Specifications).

Post the cancellation notice at the Sam Lake House. If you posted the original notice at the Store and Library, also put the cancellation there.

Post the cancellation notice on the website:

- If the calendar event already exists:
  - Edit the event title to say “CANCELLED”
  - Put the text of the “anti-agenda” in the body of the event.
- If the calendar event hadn't been created yet, then that means you didn't notice it properly in the first place. Don't create one just to post the cancellation.
- If a minutes/agendas page was already created, then upload the cancellation and put the text of the “anti-agenda” in the body.
- If a minutes/agendas page hadn't been created yet, then upload the cancellation to the minutes/agendas page of the next meeting.

## Reschedule

Do the same stuff as for Cancelling but label it RESCHEDULED and be sure to list the info of the new meeting.

## Continue

If a board needs to continue a discussion to a later meeting, the process depends on if it was a formal hearing or just a regular discussion topic.

### Hearing

A formal hearing requires a formal continuance. That just means you need to note in the minutes that the hearing will be continued and at what date/time.

Abutters do not need to be noticed again. If there was a Concord Monitor advertisement, you don't need to do it again.

Technically you don't need to notice it again at all because it was formally stated at the first hearing, but best practice is to re-advertise it as if it was a regular agenda item. Publish the agenda as early as possible and consider touching base with key stakeholders to remind them of the continuance.

Make sure to put the minutes from the first hearing and the agenda for the continued hearing in the case file.

### Regular Discussion Topic

If the Board just wants to continue discussing a topic at the next meeting, nothing formal needs to happen. Just make note that the topic should be on the next agenda.

## Handling Mistakes

### What if a quorum doesn't show up in person?

You can either reschedule the meeting for a time that everyone can show up, or you can continue the meeting but not make any decisions or have substantial discussion that would lead to a decision.

If it is a public hearing rather than a regular meeting, then you **must** reschedule.

If you have a quorum but only if you count someone who is present via Zoom, that doesn't legally count as a quorum. This was temporarily allowed during COVID, but unless the State issues another emergency order, **we can no longer conduct public meetings over Zoom.**

Some examples of topics you could continue discussing:

- Compiling monthly data about solar panel output
- Providing updates on action items from previous meetings
- Telling the group about what a member learned at a conference
- Logistical issues and other things that don't technically need to be done in a meeting
- Editing a document draft like you would in a Working Session

If you continue, you still need to take minutes as if it was a normal meeting.

### What if the Board closes a meeting too soon?

If the Board closes a meeting and then continues to discuss topics that need to be covered during a meeting, they either need to stop talking and disperse, or reopen the meeting.

Best practice is for board members to just leave right away after a meeting, but this is a small town and people often socialize after meetings as they head out the door. You don't need to stop people from talking about their weekend plans, but if they remember an agenda item that they forgot to discuss or they resume a discussion that was closed already, then that is an illegal meeting. Consult the flowchart at the top of this document if you are unsure if what they are talking about is allowed.

There aren't any RSAs that talk about reopening a meeting. So to make sure we comply with the spirit of the RTK law, Canterbury only allows reopening of a meeting if everyone is still present. This includes all board members, and both in-person and virtual spectators. That way there isn't anyone who thought the meeting was over, walked away, and then missed the chance to participate in the continued discussion.

This should only be done when the continued discussion cannot wait until the next meeting. The minutes must reflect what happened, that you checked no one had already left, and why continued discussion couldn't wait until the next meeting.

### **What if the Board talks about public topics in non-public session?**

During a non-public session, you can only talk about the topic that was declared when entering non-public session.

If the conversation wanders from that topic, then they need to exit the non-public session.

If the conversation wandered to a different topic that is also covered by RSA 91-A:3, II, then they need to enter a new non-public session and state the new reason. If you know this is going to happen, you can state both of the reasons when you initially enter non-public session.

The spirit of this law is to ensure the public knows about what their elected officials are doing while also acknowledging that some topics cover private information that could hurt someone if it was widely known. While some public information may be brought up during a non-public discussion in relation to a non-public topic, that public information shouldn't be the focus and no decisions should be made.

For example, if the Selectboard went into non-public session for reason 91-A:3, II(b) to discuss hiring a new employee in the Highway Department, that is the only topic they can talk about.

- If they rehash discussion about how hard it has been to hire (which is public info) that is ok as long as they don't make decisions and they stick to how that relates to the person they are considering hiring.
- If they start talking about if they should promote another employee (which is 91-A:3, II(a) not b), then they need to exit non-public session and reenter it with the correct reason.
- If they start talking about if the Highway Department needs a new piece of equipment (which is public info), then they need to exit non-public session.

Conversations can flow quickly, so try to catch wandering topics as soon as possible and redirect the board to the topic at hand.

### **What if you missed a posting deadline?**

Bottom line is DON'T MISS DEADLINES. These are super important for the Town to be compliant with RSA 91-A and if someone complains about a mistake to the State, both the Town and the individuals involved could be fined. WE WANT TO COMPLY because it's the right thing to do.

If you see that a deadline was missed and it is too late to take corrective action, then contact the Town Administrator.

### Notices

If you didn't post the notice for a meeting in time, the meeting should be rescheduled.

If you posted notice in one place (e.g. website) in time but didn't post in the other place (e.g. Sam Lake House) in time, technically the requirements for RSA 91-A haven't been met and the meeting should be rescheduled. However, this is a gray area and the Chair of the Board should make a judgement call based on the following:

- How important is it that this meeting happen? Could it be rescheduled for 24 hours from now?
- Are the topics being discussed controversial? **If it is a hot topic or the Board was planning on making a land use or monetary decision, then it is better to err on the side of caution.**
- Was it a regularly scheduled meeting? If so, then this meeting was already widely known about through the website calendar, Board page on the website, and annual Town Report. So that plus the one correctly done posting could be considered enough.
- If the paper posting in the Sam Lake House wasn't put up in time because the office was closed, no one would have seen it anyway, so it doesn't really matter.

If you narrowly missed a deadline by a couple of hours, consider the same questions as the previous scenario.

If you didn't realize that the meeting wasn't noticed correctly until after the meeting happened, then consider the following:

- What was discussed/decided upon? You may want to have the Board vote to ratify the actions done at the improperly noticed meeting at their next meeting.
- Did no one show up when you expected an audience? You might want to just redo the entire discussion and decision making process at the next meeting.
- Regardless of your decision, contact the Town Administrator and he will determine if Legal should be consulted.

### Minutes

If you missed the 5 day deadline for posting minutes, start by posting them ASAP.

Besides posting ASAP, there isn't really anything you can do. If someone complains, direct them to the Town Administrator.

### **What if you miss what someone said?**

Try these in the order listed:

- If you realized you missed something while the meeting is still happening, you can ask someone to repeat themselves.
- If there is a recording, trying playing it back to see if it was caught on camera.

- If it was just a word you didn't understand, ask around to see if anyone knows. For example, if you heard/wrote "Highway is considering buying a new greater??" because you aren't familiar with the topic of "road graders", then feel free to ask someone who has more experience.
- If it was something larger/more important and isn't on any recording, then make a note in the draft and bring it to the attention of the Board when you send it to them. They can confer at the next meeting to see if anyone remembers and determine what they want the minutes to say.
- If you didn't even realize that you missed something but someone brings it up to you as a suggested correction, then just put it in the list of suggested corrections for the Board to decide on at the next meeting.
- If someone brings up that something was missed or incorrect after the Board has already voted to finalize the minutes, then it is too late. If that person wants to, they can bring it up to the Board and the discussion about it could be noted in the minutes of that meeting, but the approved minutes from the original meeting cannot be changed.

# Document Specifications

The document filename should be formatted using the following specification. **This is important so that when we upload it to the website and store it electronically it sorts correctly.**

YYYY-MM-DD [Full Name Of Board] [Document Type] [Case Number] [Document Status]

- YYYY: The 4-digit year. (e.g. 2025 not 25)
- MM: The 2-digit month. (e.g. 01 for January, 09 for September, 11 for November)
- DD: The 2-digit day (Use a leading zero: 01 not 1)
- [Full Name of Board]: Use the full name not the abbreviation (e.g. Zoning Board of Adjustment not ZBA)
- [Document Type]: Usually Minutes or Agenda
  - If it is just a public hearing notice you could also call it Notice
  - The ZBA generally uses Notice rather than Agenda
  - The ZBA may also have Decision
- [Case Number]: Only applies to the ZBA
- [Document Status]: DRAFT, FINAL, nothing, and/or #
  - Use all caps for DRAFT or FINAL because it is really important to keep track of which is which.
  - **On the final pdf version of minutes, omit the status.**
  - Could also put a number at the end if there were multiple versions of something.

Examples:

- 2025-02-03 Board of Selectmen Agenda 2
  - If you initially posted one agenda, but for the meeting itself you printed out an updated one, you would add 2 to the end of the file name.
- 2025-01-26 Zoning Board of Adjustment Minutes 2024-7 DRAFT
  - The draft minutes for the ZBA meeting on 1/26/25 where they held a hearing on case 2024-7.
- 2025-01-13 Board of Selectmen DRAFT 2
  - If the minutes go through multiple rounds of corrections (rare but has happened), you need to label them differently. There needs to be a paper trail of when drafts were posted and what changes occurred between then and finalizing.
- 2025-01-30 Planning Board Minutes
  - The final PDF version of the minutes for the PB meeting on 1/30/25.

**All documents must be converted to PDF.** You can keep the Microsoft Word/Google Docs/etc. version of the file, but it also has to be PDF.

This is for two reasons:

1. So that when it goes on the website, it is in a file format that anyone can read.
2. So that it is safe for long-term storage and archiving. (Required by [RSA 33-A:5-a](#))